



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WARNING ISSUED FOR RURAL AREAS CONTAINING TICKS **County Environmental Health Encourages Residents To Take Precautions**

Residents working or playing in rural or open space areas should take necessary precautions to avoid being bitten by ticks. Laboratory tests run on ticks and a wild rabbit (from eastern Encinitas) were positive for Tularemia. Other areas of the county may also be affected.

Tularemia, or rabbit fever, is caused by the bacterium *Francisella tularensis*. This bacterium is normally found in rodents, wild rabbits, and other animals. It is transmitted to humans through tick bites, fly bites or by handling infected animal carcasses. Symptoms of the disease may include a sudden fever, an ulcer at the site of the bite and swollen, painful lymph nodes.

If you develop any of these symptoms, or you suspect you have been exposed to tularemia, contact your physician immediately. Tularemia is not directly transmitted from person to person.

People working or visiting areas containing ticks should wear light-colored clothing. (Doing so allows ticks to be easily seen before they attach to the skin.) Wear long pants and a long-sleeved shirt. Tuck your shirt into your pants and your pants into boots or socks. Apply insect repellent to clothing and footwear, and when doing so follow product label directions. When hiking use marked trails, avoid brush and periodically check yourself and others for ticks. Dogs should be kept on leashes and also checked for ticks.

For more information or answers to your questions, visit the County Department of Environmental Health website (www.sdcounty.ca.gov/deh), the Center for Disease Control web site (www.cdc.gov/health/tularemia.htm) or call the Department of Environmental Health at (858) 694-2888.